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Letter to Philander Chase

Robert Twelldell

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Ardenwick, Manchester

18. Febr'y. 1824

Right Rev. Very Dear Sir,

When I had the happiness and honor of seeing you here, you were pleased to express a wish to hear from me; and I beg to assure you that no wish from you, least of all one so flattering and kind, can fail to be respected & remembered by me. The great object of your visit to this Country, and the grounds of our common Christianity, are more than sufficient to supply a subject for correspondence. I have perused the statement which you had the goodness to leave with me with the greatest interest - and with a deep conviction both of the magnitude of the object which has brought you to our shores, and, allow me to add, of the rare and generous devotedness of mind & substance on your part to the glory of God and the salvation of souls "for whom Christ died." How is it possible, dear Sir, for any man, himself duly impressed with such momentous considerations, to do less than say with the holy Psalmist, "The Lord prosper you, we wish you good luck in the name of the Lord" ¹¹³? For myself, it grieves me to make the confession - but God "knoweth that I lie not", that beyond wishes and prayers for your success - which you have & shall ever have from me (for I shall never again think of America without a devout recollection of the Bishop of Ohio) little is in my power to offer towards the promotion of your Cause. It has been my misfortune - at

the suit of a hear, but unnatural, relative, to be involved for twelve years
in a litigation in the Court of Chancery - standing merely on my defence &
for the preservation of my little patrimony; and whilst the issue of that
suit in my favor (about a year ago) has merely re-instated me in
my original rights, it has left me and my family - perhaps for another
generation, burdened with heavy costs, which, in order to discharge
them, form a charge upon my income both durable & oppressive. Thus
the means which a kind Providence had bestowed upon me are
exceedingly curtailed; and thus it is but a mite, my dear Sir,
which I can put into your treasury. Such as it is, may the divine
blessing go with it. It is not worth all this explanation; nor should
I have presumed to trouble you with the matter at all, did I not
deem it in some measure due to myself, aware as I am that my
friends in Manchester (tho' not ignorant, most of them, of the
above facts) seem disposed to have little respect to the pecuniary
of my case, & to appreciate my means much beyond what they
really are. I venture on this ground to hope for your
indulgence in the introduction of what otherwise would scarcely be
reasonable in addressing a stranger. Before I dismiss the
topic, permit me to suggest that probably it will better serve your
cause (at least in this place) not to insert my name in your
list, but in the place of it to say "a friend". I only offer the
suggestion however from a regard to your interest. The public,
ignorant of private circumstances, are easily influenced by
find executives, on some occasions, for withholding or curtailing
their bounty.

I shall hope in due time to be favoured with some account
from yourself of the success you have met with in London & elsewhere.
Since you left Manchester, I have already sufficiently expressed how sacred
and powerful I deem your claims, on the principles of our common faith,

to the support of all pious and liberal men in this Country. In every other
yet it requires but little knowledge of mankind to be at the same time disposed
to hear that even such claims are not always felt, if they be indeed acknow-
-ledged. I must add more - and I do it with grief, that there are very
many, I fear, of my Countrymen - men too of piety and great private worth
whose religious views and feelings are so narrow, if not bigotted, that out
of the pale of their own particular Communion, or out of the circle of their
own little sect or party, they can neither discern nor recognise any thing
either of truth, charity or salvation. I suppose, from all that I have heard,
that you may in some instances have found this opinion verified. May
the divine consolations heal any wound which may thus
have been (perhaps unintentionally) inflicted on your generous
friend. This is indeed, my dear Sir, as you described
it when we conversed here, a blessed Country: we have
amongst us much of the true light of Christianity, and have
I trust, been made the instruments, in the hands of providence,
of diffusing it widely & successfully in other climes; but though
myself an Englishman, and yet more, a minister of our pure, established
Church, I will not so disguise the truth as not to confess, that we
have also amongst us - and I mean especially amongst what is
called the religious world, much of what appears to be not only igno-
-rance but strong delusion - much also of prejudice, spiritual pride
and above all uncharitableness in the midst of all our high privileges
in despite of our blessed, divine Religion. Many no doubt are the
conspiring causes of all this, but the one that predominates & perhaps
includes all the rest, is evidently party-spirit. This pervades our
religionists of every description - both within & without the established
Church, to an extent which seems to be quite awful - and, did
time & opportunity permit, I think I could adduce illustrations of
the fact which would convince your understanding. But alas! would
they not grieve your pious, catholic spirit? I feel that they
would. I have mourned over the evil myself - and seen and

Sweddell

18th Feb. 1824

paid



The Right Rev. Bishop Chase

to the care of

W. Maynard Esq.

Barister at Law

Queen Square London



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felt so much of it, that it is always with serious pain that I advert to
the subject. Nor should I now have done so, but that it seemed to my mind as though
the declaration of the fact might not be without its use to a stranger, coming amongst us
with views such as yours, and mixing much probably with the religious. But it is a
wide and momentous subject - deeply deserving the research of all who love the truth,
but for which I have no space, nor your perhaps at present any leisure. Yet I cannot
just to mention another who gave into it with much candor and ability, a Mr.
Whately - a Clergyman of our Episcopal Church. The title of the Book is, I think,
"Bampton Lectures" by the Rev. - Whately - it is quite a recent publication
Mr. Maynard can doubtless direct you to it. [The subject is on Slavery and Abuse
of Party Spirit in Religion] of party spirit in Religion, together with
my own most respectful and affectionate remembrance & good wishes to you
to assure you how very sincerely I am your devoted humble servant Robert Sweddell